



COMMITTEE WORK SESSION APRIL 19, 2010

Committee Members Present: Todd Bergstrom
Don Nicolard
Brenda Hlas
Bill Mowery
Ken Braman
Scott Pelot
Mike Zita

Also Present: Mayor David Koontz-Absent
Rick Ryland
John Moss
Pete Kostoff
Karla Richards
Ann Campbell

The Committee Work Session convened on Monday, April 19, 2010 at 7:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of the Safety Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Mike Zita, President of Council. Following a salute to the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance, there was a moment of silent prayer. Mr. Zita announced that Norton Boy Scout Josh Myers was present to earn a badge requirement.

General Topics of Discussion:

Tree City USA Status

Mr. Zita turned this discussion over to Ms. Neva Gibson, Chair for the Parks and Cemetery Board for the details. Ms. Gibson stated that the Parks Board has been reviewing the Tree City information for Norton to become a Tree City. Currently there are over 249 communities that have the Tree City status, including Wadsworth and Hudson. Ms. Gibson stated that there are four (4) requirements to become a Tree City, and briefly explained each one. Ms. Gibson discussed one of the requirements is for the City to have an annual budget of at least \$2.00 per capita. Ms. Gibson explained what is included in the \$2.00 per capita requirement. Ms. Gibson stated it could include the salaries paid to the parks workers, mulching materials, landscaping, lawn mowing and even the cost of a chipper. Ms. Gibson stated she felt we would have no problem meeting this requirement. Ms. Gibson stated she has discussed this with Mayor Koontz and Mr. Ryland and the biggest hurdle would be the keeping of the records and tracking the activity. Mr. Ryland assured Ms. Gibson the Administration would help the Parks Board with this in addition to helping with any grant projects.

Ms. Gibson stated we would like to apply for 2011 Tree City Status and we have to document and keep records for an entire year before applying. Ms. Gibson stated that our forester of region 3; Mr. Alan Seward will be at their May 12, 2010 Parks Board meeting and invited all of Council to attend if interested. Ms. Gibson stated one of her favorite reasons was that when it comes to the State giving grant money out, they seem to take a preference to communities that already have a Tree City status. Ms. Gibson stated that Mr. Seward will be conducting a two (2) day tree work shop that is being offered and she is very interested in attending and hoped that someone from our Service Dept. would be able to join her. Mrs. Hlas stated she met with Mr. Moss earlier today and was advised of a letter dated April 18, 2010 going out to the Parks Board, which documents the amount the Parks Dept. spent in 2009. Mr. Zita asked Ms. Gibson if any action would be required of Council at this time, and Ms. Gibson replied nothing would be needed until later on this year, they plan on filing the application in November.

Trash Haulers Services Bid Proposal Review

Mr. Bergstrom stated the Administration has prepared a final draft for our review, and he questioned if all of his questions and or comments were addressed that he submitted (see attached). Mr. Bergstrom discussed one concern, which is if the City could handle the billing system based on the 7.5% fee, and what type of billing system would we go with. Mr. Pelot noted a conflict on page #1 under the sealed bid section in the 5th sentence; the dates of the initial contract are stated as July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2015, however later in the paragraph it states a four (4) year term. Mr. Pelot stated that he was not sure doing our own billing right out of the gate was the best thing, adding that we could require the contract to supply us with a database of customers monthly. Mr. Nicolard stated that since we are a city providing a city service, we should be doing our own billing and collections, especially if we eventually end up with our own master metering in the future. Mr. Bergstrom stated he did not want to lose touch with the customer service aspect. Mr. Moss stated that ideally we would be looking at purchasing software and this could accommodate the customer service issues. Mr. Danko, a Norton resident, complained about this whole idea he does not need it and he does not want it and shouldn't have to pay for it. Mr. Danko discussed the widening of Cleveland Massillon Road being a \$15,000,000.00 project and the City of Norton is pay \$1,000,000.00 and the government will pay the rest, is this where you plan on getting the rest to pay for this trash program? Mr. Danko complained about a trash truck being out in his neighborhood the other evening at 7:15. Mr. Bergstrom stated that within this bid there would be time restrictions for the contractor. Ms. Alice Wagner, a Norton resident, said she gets a discount from her contractor for paying six (6) month in advance and asked of we would do the same here? Ms. Wagner discussed a neighbor who recently lost her job and her contractor has permitted her to bring their trash over to her hose for collection, and asked if we would be able to accommodate someone like this? Mr. Bergstrom stated he was not sure but that would be something to think about. Mr. Jim Lino, a Norton resident, stated that when Time Warner Cable came into the city, the city made a buck or two from that deal, and now with water and sewer coming in the city stands to make a buck or two there. Mr. Lino stated it just looks like another way for Norton to make a buck.

Mr. Lino stated he also does not like the threatening term “you will be assessed” if you fail to pay your bills. Mr. Robert Copen, a Norton resident, stated the streets in Norton have his sympathy they will never be up to par as they should be. Mr. Copen asked why are you jamming this down our throats? You tried to do this two (2) years ago and now you have less than fifty (50) percent participating using the one (1) hauler you have now. Mr. Copen discussed the loss in revenue from the licensing fees, and that Council was not listening to the residents, you’re just doing what you want to do. Mr. Copen asked what ever happened to the idea of surveying the residents to see what we wanted; don’t you want to hear from us? Mr. Bergstrom stated that he had researched this and found that we did survey the residents in the past maybe back in 2006, and they said they wanted a citywide hauler and he did not feel we needed to do another one. Mr. Copen suggested you leave an opt-out clause in there because most of us do not want this. Mr. Danko questioned the use and costs of bags instead of containers. Mr. Danko stated the Norton Post had a show of hands for the support of the school levy, that’s going to cost him and extra \$20.00 and month and he is not supporting the school levy. Mr. Jason Sams, a Norton resident, stated he helps the Mayor of Mt. Vernon with getting his trash out and he uses 1-2-3 Disposal and supports them and that owner is a Norton and Mt. Vernon resident. Mr. Alex Stavarz, a Norton resident, stated that Council is going to do what they already have their minds made up to do, however he has not heard of one resident in support of this. Mr. Bergstrom stated we had a resident in support at one of our last meetings, and he has spoken with some on the phone, they may just not come to our meetings to tell us. Mr. Bergstrom stated the whole goal of this idea is to provide the residents with better service, better price and is a service we can control. Mr. Stavarz stated he believed the whole root of this thing started years ago when someone on Council took issue with open burning and that certain Council members are pushing for this. Mr. Stavarz stated that there are more trucks on his road since it was repaved than on other roads. Mr. Zita stated that Clark Mill Road is in the best shape it’s ever been in and some residents would love to have that. Mr. Nicolard stated he wished the city had the money to purchase our own trucks and do our own hauling, and by doing things this way now perhaps that’s where we will be headed in the future. Mr. Mowery stated there comes a time when you just have to realize that some things are just not attainable. That’s what is happening here, it’s a break-even situation at best. Mr. Mowery stated that to try this in his ward, to sell a dictatorship type of service to his residents, he couldn’t support that. These residents already fee betrayed by the city and he cant even go there, money dictates it all. Mr. Bergstrom agreed that money is it, and with a single trash hauler it opens up competition, saving the residents money, in addition to opening the door for grant opportunities that we would not be able to get. Mr. Mowery stated that having an opt out provision is their right to decide. Mrs. Hlas reminded everyone that its not Councils right to increase the residents trash bills, if the bids come back too high we have the option not to accept the bid. Mr. Don Johnson with J & J Refuse Company, spoke about the bid presented, and suggested the contract be at least five (5) years minimum for the best possible pricing. Mr. Johnson discussed invoicing residents that do not pay, you have no stipulations spelled out, and you need to have a process such as a cut off list, which is not mentioned. Mr. Johnson discussed Munroe Falls and that they went with an exclusive contractor and then to a subscriber service with an opt out plan.

Mr. Sams suggested that a better property maintenance code would be much more productive. Mr. Bergstrom suggested we continue this item into the next Committee Work Session.

Request to Increase Architect Contract Fees- New Fire Station

Mrs. Hlas stated we now have the documentation requested to increase the architect fees to \$45,000.00. Mr. Bergstrom stated that after review and felt this was a fair request. Mr. Ryland stated after his review with the architect firm he also felt the numbers were justifiable and in line. Mr. Pelot stated that initially he totally disagreed, but after looking over the extras that were done he does not have an issue with it. Mrs. Hlas moved to add this to Councils next agenda with emergency language, waiving the second and third readings, seconded by Mr. Bergstrom. Mr. Pelot asked if this action would require any changes to the budget legislation and Mr. Moss replied it does not.

Roll Call: Yeas: Hlas, Bergstrom, Nicolard, Braman, Pelot, Zita
Nays: Mowery

Motion passed 6-1.

Budget Adjustments

Mrs. Hlas turned this discussion over to Mr. Moss for the details. Mr. Moss stated the City has received most of the insurance settlement from the old fire station, to date we have received \$112, 264.39. We do anticipate a little more relating to some payroll/overtime expenses. Mr. Moss stated the other adjustment is for grants and supplies received in the amounts of \$55,670.00. Mr. Moss stated these adjustments would be under Fund #106-Fire/EMS non-capital and Fund 301-Assistance to Firefighters. Mr. Pelot asked about the settlement cost, and Mr. Moss indicated it was to repair that building and for overtime. Mrs. Hlas moved to add this to Councils next agenda with emergency language, waiving the second and third readings, seconded by Mr. Bergstrom.

Roll Call: Yeas: Hlas, Bergstrom, Nicolard, Mowery, Braman, Pelot, Zita
Nays: None

Motion passed 7-0.

Unfinished Business:

Mr. Mowery stated that since the Mayor is not here he asked Mr. Ryland about the ongoing talks about Brentwood Water, adding that he received a call from Mr. Nicolard's ward about the surcharges. Mr. Ryland indicated there are no ongoing talks with Barberton relating to reducing the water rates for Brentwood residents, they are paying the same rate as everyone else. Mr. Ryland added that those rates are already established in the Barberton-Norton Water & Sewer Agreement. Mr. Mowery asked if Mr. Kostoff has looked at that agreement and Mr. Kostoff replied no, he had not been asked to review it.

Mr. Mowery requested Mr. Kostoff to review this document, specifically page #16 where it discusses the usage and water metering. Mr. Mowery stated that this is Barberton's obligation and why don't we question their legislation. Mr. Mowery stated he would like to see that \$60,000.00 in revenue they are getting spent somewhere else in Norton. Mr. Ryland reminded Council the last time this was challenged it cost the City of Norton over \$210,000.00 in legal fees and we go nowhere with it. Mr. Ryland discussed the Greenwich Road Sewer Line Project and he also felt the figure were high. Mr. Ryland stated he had discussions with the engineers as to why and it was due to the fact that in this area some of these lines are 18-20 ft. deep, which kicked up the costs by approximately \$35,000.00. There was discussion as to Council looking into passing that \$35,000.00 extra costs on to the City's portion, thereby slightly adjusting the estimates for the residents. Mrs. Elaine Tompkins, a Norton resident asked about the exact starting point and Mr. Ryland stated it would be in front of the North Akron Savings and Loan Bank. Mrs. Tompkins discussed an older proposed project with Akron General Medical Center near I-76 and they were going to bring in water and sewer with that project. Mrs. Tompkins stated then the residents could connect and reimburse that contractor. Mrs. Tompkins questioned if Acme would get any reimbursements, and Mr. Ryland relied no, on the city line it is an extension. Mrs. Tompkins inquired about the \$35,000.00 increased costs and was this in excess of the city's 2%? Mr. Ryland replied that it could be an option for the city to pick up that extra expense, it would be up to the direction of Council. Mrs. Tompkins stated it has been report that this is an eight (8) inch sewer line and asked for clarification. Mr. Ryland concurred that the sewer line is eight (8) inches and the water line is sixteen (16) inches.

New Business:

Mr. Bergstrom provided Council with the attached hand out information relating to Utilities Committee meetings. Mr. Bergstrom stated that due to the fact the Utility Committee seems to have a lot on their plate he is proposing holding a few extra separate meetings set up on a bi-monthly basis to allow more time to move forward on some critical issues. Mr. Bergstrom stated he felt there is too much to combine this with regular Committee of the Whole meetings. Mrs. Hlas stated she was fine with that, however she hoped the other members of Council would participate as well. Mr. Nicolard stated when he was on Council before that's how all our committees were done, not sure this is a better or worse option. Mr. Kostoff stated that in the twenty-five (25) years experience with municipal government, the order of legislative process is best done by the individual committees. It is the exception to the rule to be governed by an unruly process. Mrs. Hlas mentioned that Mrs. Richards takes her flex time off on Wednesday afternoons and this would not be fair for her to have to come back to work for a Wednesday night meeting, and suggested holding them an hour or so before the Monday Council meeting. Mr. Nicolard commented that he was not sure Mrs. Richards was even required to attend these meetings. Mrs. Richards commented that in the past it was the duty of the Chair to return an information sheet into the Clerk so that some type of minutes were prepared, and sometimes those forms never got turned in, thus no minutes were produced.

Mrs. Richards commented about the Charter provision that requires her to attend all meetings of Council. Mr. Bergstrom stated we could wait and see what comes out of our Saturday workshop and go from there.

Public Comment-Agenda and Non Agenda Items:

None

Topics for the next Work Session:

Trash haulers bid contract. Mr. Moss indicated that he is looking ahead at the schedule and will need to address some budgetary issues with some six (6) month notes that are due by September 2, 2010 and would need to have the legislation adopted before Council goes out on summer recess. Mr. Zita reminded everyone about the annual Saturday Workshop, doors open for a light breakfast at 8:30 AM, meeting runs from 9 AM to 1:00 PM, and that Mr. Kostoff is working with Mrs. Richards on the agenda items.

Adjourn

There being no other business to come before the Committee Work Session, the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 PM.

Mike Zita, President of Council

****NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM****

All Committee Meetings will be held at the Norton Safety Administration Building, unless otherwise noted.